

Where have all the Records Gone?

Restoring Iraq's infrastructure - especially its water resources - poses a variety of challenges for the Army Corps of Engineers. One is how to impose management of on a couple of river systems where the historic records have disappeared, where looters have apparently trashed the ministry of irrigation, and where security is a real challenge. The rising waters in the capital and the coming summer require that the Corps move quickly in order to ensure that water is available in the dry months.

Fortunately, among the 35,000 Corps of Engineers employees are records sleuths of the center of expertise for Curation and Management of Archeological Collections at the Corps District office in St. Louis, MO. They worked with the Task Force Water Control in Mobile, AL, a primary point of contact for Corps work in Iraq, on records recovery and information development. Their first response was to a request concerning records and the whereabouts of as-built drawings for what is now the Baghdad International Airport.

For their next problem, the records sleuths found there were no water control records in Iraq, and set to work to see if they could find any water control manuals and hydropower information - all designed by foreign firms - from the original designers.